

Bank of San Mateo County  
2000-02 Broadway  
Redwood City  
San Mateo County  
California

HABS No. CA-1991

HABS  
CAL,  
41-REDWO,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BANK OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

HABS No. CA-1991

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1-

Location: 2000-2002 Broadway (northwest corner of Broadway and Main), Redwood City, San Mateo County, California.

Present Owner: Clara B. Behrens and Louis A. Behrens, 842 Edgewood Rd., Redwood City, California.

Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: The oldest stone-faced building in the county, this stately Renaissance Revival building dates from 1900. Incorporated in 1891, before moving to its present site, it is the earliest bank in San Mateo County. Founded by prominent early citizens of the city, the bank quickly became a leading financial institution between San Francisco and San Jose.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1899-1900. The foundations were laid in August 1899 and the brick and stonework begun in October 1899. The building was completed in January 1900.
2. Architect: Alfred I. Coffey of Martens and Coffey, San Francisco.
3. Builder, Contractor, Supplier:

1899 - T.C. Rice foundation contractor  
- Robert Brown, general contractor  
- O.E. Brady and Son, San Francisco, stone and brick work  
1900 - T.C. Rice, interior plaster work  
1909 - Robert Brown, general contractor for addition  
- L. and E. Emanuel, interior work

4. Original Plans and Construction:

Redwood City Democrat, 8-31-1899 "The stone for the new bank buildings, which is being prepared in San Francisco, will be ready for use in a few weeks. It comes from Utah and has a faint reddish tinge."

Redwood City Democrat, 1-18-1900, "The framework of the dome of the bank building has been completed and is ready for its covering of sheet iron. It is surmounted by a flag pole, giving the structure a nice finish."

5. Additions and Alterations: The original bank building extended 52 feet on Main Street and 30 feet on A Street (now Broadway). The earthquake of April 18, 1906, caused considerable damage to the stone-faced building and the dome was toppled; however, the bank was rebuilt as before.

In 1909, with the purchase of the adjoining Ross building on Broadway, the bank was expanded with a 25' addition, designed by the original architect, Alfred I. Coffey, in a similar neo-classical style. The addition was built for an estimated \$20,000. The recessed shield and eagle, facing Broadway, was installed in 1910 in the previous entrance to the upper floors of the bank.

The stone inscriptions, "San Mateo Co. Savings Bank," and "The First National Bank of San Mateo County," which were originally part of the building, were chiselled off in 1963 during the few days of occupancy by First American Refinance Company.

Interior remodelling took place in 1970-71 in an attempt to bring the building up to earthquake codes by the California Investors Group assisted by Bud Anderson. Progress was halted due to the difficulties in conforming to building codes.

6. Historical Events and Personages: A pamphlet, Central California Illustrated, (p. 118), published by Southern Pacific in 1900 said of the Bank of San Mateo County: "Among the many solid financial institutions of this section of California none ranks better than the banking house here named, according to the territory and amount of business it represents. Its capital is conservative and equal to existing conditions and surplus shown by its last annual statement provided that it is not wasting opportunities. It was incorporated in 1891, has a capital of \$200,000 and a surplus of \$60,000. Its president is L.J. Ross; vice-president, P.P. Chamberlain; cashier and secretary, L.P. Behrens. These gentlemen are all prominent in the business life of this county, are among its wealthiest and longest resident citizens and have every confidence and respect of their fellow citizens. This bank is erecting a new block to cost \$20,000. It will be the only stone building in the county."

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Brick with sandstone facing, 55'-7" (four bays on Broadway) x 52'-2" (four bays on Main Street), two stories, corner portico with second-story bay and dome above, sheet metal pediments, cornices and dome, Renaissance Revival.

## PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### A. Primary and unpublished sources:

- a. Deed Books, San Mateo County Recorder's Office, Hall of Records, Redwood City, California.

- b. Old Views: (From the collection of Richard Schellens, Redwood City Historian).

- 1) photo, 1887, Broadway and Main, Grand Hotel
- 2) photo, pre 1906 earthquake, corner of A and Main Streets shows front facade and Ross building on A Street (Broadway)
- 3) earthquake photos, severe damage to bank and dome in street
- 4) 1910, Main and Broadway, full facade with addition
- 5) details, close ups, post 1963, inscriptions removed.

B. Secondary sources:

Olmsted, Roger, and Watkins, T.H., sponsored by the Junior League of San Francisco, Inc., Here Today, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1968. p. 312

Dorothy Regnery, An Enduring Heritage, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976, pp. 58-61.

Redwood City Democrat: 7-7-1910, 9-8-1910, 11-24-1910, 3-18-1909, 7-1-1909, 1-18-1900, 3-8-1900, 3-22-1900, 4-12-1900, 5-18-1899, 8-3-1899, 8-10-1899, 8-31-1899, 10-5-1899.

Redwood City Tribune: 4-17-1972, 12-7-1951.

Century 67, Redwood City Historical Trail, City of Redwood City publication, 1967, Historical Site No. 4.

- C. Interview, Mr. Louis A. Behrens, Redwood City, California, July 1974.

Prepared by: R. Patrick Christopher  
Historic American Buildings Survey  
August 1974

PART IV. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

This project was sponsored jointly by the National Park Service and the Junior League of Palo Alto. Recorded under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the project was completed during the summer of 1974 at the Historic American Buildings Survey field office at the Latham-Hopkins Gatehouse, Menlo Park, California. Project supervisor was Kim Spurgeon (Assistant Professor of Architecture, Kansas State University); the project historian was R. Patrick Christopher (Columbia University); and the student architects were Stephen Farneth (Carnegie Mellon University), Robert Randall (University of Houston), Aino Vieira da Rosa (University of Oregon), and Amy Weinstein (University of Pennsylvania). The written data were edited by Dorothy F. Regnery in San Mateo County in 1975 and by Alison K. Hoagland, HABS Historian, in February 1983.